

American Fisheries Society

Oregon Chapter

OR Chapter AFS: PO Box 8062 Portland, OR 97207-8062

www.orafs.org



March 23, 2015

Dear Honorable Legislator:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS) is comprised of over 500 fisheries and aquatic science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, diverse private employers, college students, and retirees. The Chapter was established in 1964 as part of the American Fisheries Society. Our mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of Oregon fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems for long-term public benefit by advancing science, education and public discourse concerning fisheries and aquatic science and by promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

During Oregon's 2013 legislative session, our organization introduced a white paper on the effects of suction dredge mining on Oregon fishes and aquatic habitats (attachment). We have recently completed a supplemental paper on mercury, geomorphology and fish/bivalve species impacts (attachment) as a companion document. As you address the challenging task of balancing the health of these resources with other interests, we ask that you consider both the original and this supplemental white paper in which we review the literature that examines the potential impacts of suction dredge mining on fisheries and aquatic resources. Both the original white paper and this supplement are the product of considerable thought, effort, scientific insight and process among members of the ORAFS.

Based on our review of the literature, we find 1) there are potentially negative effects of suction dredge mining on stream morphology and spawning/reproductive success of some fish and freshwater bivalves (freshwater mollusks), 2) mercury impacts can be increased by dredging and particularly may affect juvenile rearing salmonids in their critical habitats, and 3) without a significant investment in monitoring and enforcement of suction dredge mining permits, best management practices and mitigation efforts are likely to be inconsistently implemented potentially harming aquatic resources.

We hope that the information provided by the ORAFS will help to inform your decisions as you consider suction dredge mining legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information.

Sincerely,

Michael Gauvin- President, American Fisheries Society-Oregon Chapter

503-947-6214, president@orafs.org

Attachments:

Effects of suction dredge mining on Oregon fishes and aquatic habitats, Supplemental Information- ORAFS March 2015
Effects of suction dredge mining on Oregon fishes and aquatic habitats- ORAFS April 2013